

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CANBER 04797 180902Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6222

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T CANBERRA 4797

EXDIS

FOR EA ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB FROM MARSHALL GREEN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, AS, RP, TH

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN PROPOSAL TO DISSOLVE SEATO

REF: STATE 169400

1. SHORTLY BEFORE REFTEL RECEIVED, FONMIN WILLESEE MENTIONED THIS SUBJECT TO ME IN COURSE OF GENERAL CONVERSATION JULY 18, AND DURING OUR CONVERSATION ALAN RENOUF PHONE WILLESEE TO INFORM HIM OF PAT SHAW'S ACCOUNT OF HIS MEETING WITH YOU REGARDING SEATO'S FUTURE.

2. FROM THE WAY WILLESEE PRESENTED THE ISSUE TO ME, IT WAS A PHILIPPINE RATHER THAN AN AUSTRALIAN INITIATIVE. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN PRESSED ON THIS IDEA BY BOTH ROMULO AND MARCOS WHEN IN PEKING. IT WAS THEN LARGELY A MATTER OF WHETHER THE FILIPINOS OR AUSTRALIANS WOULD FIRST TAKE THIS ISSUE UP WITH THAIS, AND I GATHER IT WAS FINALLY DECIDED THAT THE FILIPINOS WOULD DO SO SINCE KHUKRIT'S VISIT TO THE PHILIPPINES WILL PRECEDE CHATCHAI'S VISIT TO AUSTRALIA. WILLESEE GAVE ME CLEARLY TO UNDERSTAND THAT, AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, A GOVERNING

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CONSIDERATION WOULD BE THAILAND'S ATTITUDES. ON THE

OTHER HAND, HIS REFERENCES TO PRIMIN WHITLAM'S DEPRECATORY ATTITUDES TOWARD SEATO SUGGESTED THAT WILLESEE MIGHT BE UNDER SOME PRESSURE FROM THE PRIMIN TO SEIZE ON THIS PHILIPPINE SUGGESTION TO RUN WITH THE BALL AGAINST SEATO.

3. WILLESEE ACKNOWLEDGED TO ME THE IMPORTANCE OF ASCERTAINING THAI VIEWS ON THIS ISSUE AND TO DO SO WITHOUT PRESSURES. WHEN, AT THAT POINT, RENOUF TELEPHONED, WILLESEE DID NOT TELL ME OF YOUR "NEGATIVE INITIAL REACTION". HE MERELY SAID THAT YOU HAD ASKED THAT NO ACTION BE TAKEN WITH THE THAIS AND FILIPINOS UNTIL YOU HAD HAD FURTHER CHANCE TO THINK THIS OVER AND GET BACK TO THE AUSTRALIANS. WITH THAT SPECIFIC PROPOSAL, WILESSEE SAID HE HAD NO PROBLEMS AND WOULD CERTAINLY WISH TO HEAR FURTHER FROM OUR SIDE.

4. COMMENT: I BELIEVE WILLESEE AND FONOFF WILL NOT WISH TO TAKE ANY INITIATIVES IN THIS MATTER WHICH WE WOULD FIND DEEPLY DISTURBING. HE AFFIRMED TO ME THAT THEY WILL TAKE NO ACTION PENDING RECEIPT OF OUR CONSIDERED RESPONSE. ANY PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM YOU THROUGH ME TO WILLESEE AND/OR RENOUF LIKELY TO BE SYMPATHETICALLY RECEIVED BY DFA. MEANWHILE, RESPONSIVE TO REFTEL, I WILL CALL WILLESEE OR RENOUF SOONEST TO UNDERLINE POINTS IN PARA 4 REFTEL.
GREEN

SECRET

NNN

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